



On the Bayou

OCTOBER 2020

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Message from the Director

Dr. Deepak Bhatnagar

The last six months have made us realize that all of us at SRRC have a bond that binds us together. We miss not being at work, not just for the tasks we must perform, but also for those interactions where we build relationships. We have not had the opportunity to share in our sorrow or celebrate all the good things.

We are saddened by the sudden loss of our Althea on Wednesday September 30. We have not had a chance to grieve collectively. She was a very special person, always helpful, always smiling even when she was going through serious health issues. She will be deeply missed and remembered for her laughter, positive outlook, and care for people.

We continue to individually deal with stress during these difficult times, sometimes sharing in our anxiety of COVID along with all the hurricanes that have threatened us this year. We have to be mindful of everyone's safety before work. Even our essential work must be organized in a safe manner. Together we will get through these unusual times.

On the brighter side, in spite of this disruption, we successfully completed our spending for the last fiscal year. Credit and thanks must go to many of our staff who deal with purchasing and other budgetary issues on a daily basis. It is a lot of work for this group, especially dealing with so many regulations that govern federal purchases. My sincere gratitude goes out to them.

Congress passed a continuing resolution, and the President signed it to keep the government funded at last year's level until December 11, 2020. So, we can keep making progress for now.

The 2020 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) is upon us. SRRC has a long history of generosity; and sharing our blessings with others is the noblest thing we do. Unless otherwise designated, all the contributions we make help the local community. Many lives have been affected by COVID, natural disasters, and other unfortunate events this year. I encourage everyone to contribute generously to CFC, and especially now, to support the charitable organizations on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our CFC team has plans for a fun and successful Campaign! I support and encourage everyone's participation.

We are welcoming new hires, virtually: Support Staff, Scientists, and Research Leaders. We will have a special gathering to make formal introductions when we get back to the Center. Until then, be patient, and cheerful, and make the most of this time. My best wishes are with you.

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Events and Observances

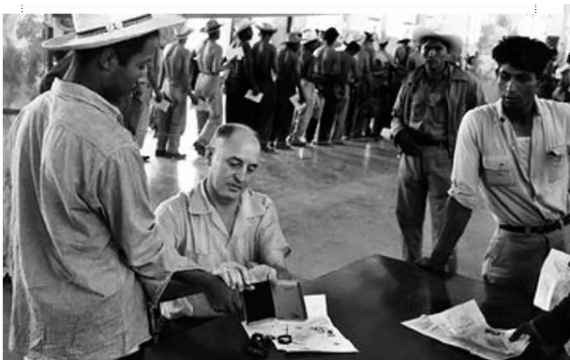
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2020 Hispanic Heritage Month

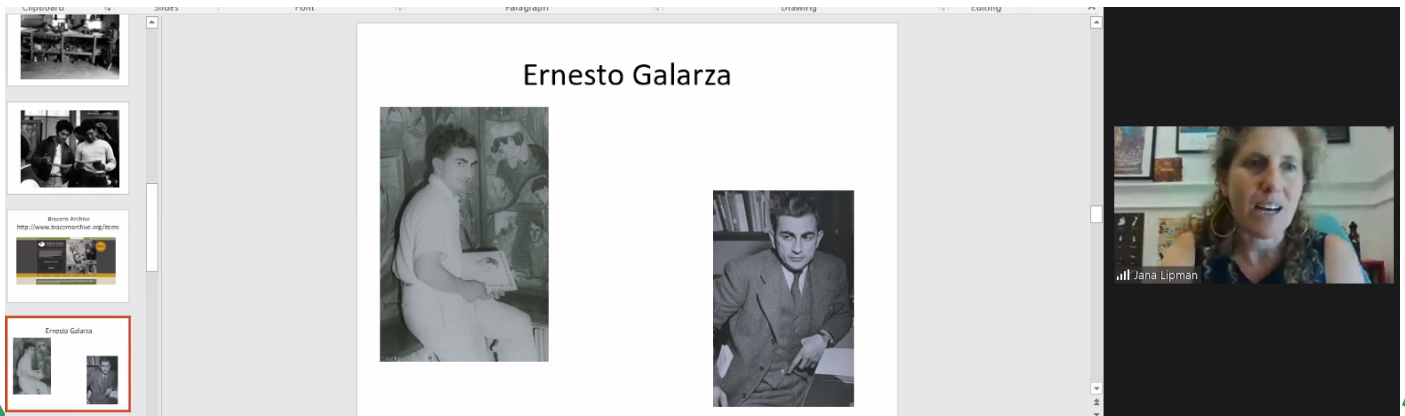
Submitted by: David Ambrogio

SRRC observed Hispanic Heritage Month (HHM) this year from September 1 to September 30. The official theme was, “Hispanics: Be Proud of Your Past and Embrace the Future”. Chile was this year’s highlighted country and four informative articles about Chile, from several of our HHM committee members, were distributed to employees throughout the month. Through these articles we learned about the artistic, literary, sports, and geographic beauty and variety of this interesting nation.

Dr. Jana Lipman, professor of history at Tulane University was our guest speaker. Her Zoom presentation on September 16 was entitled, “The Bracero Program and the History of Subsequent Guest Worker Programs in Louisiana and the Gulf South”. The Bracero program was a series of laws and agreements passed in 1942 between the United States and Mexico that guaranteed certain labor, wage, and civil rights protections for temporary manual laborers from Mexico. Dr. Lipman outlined the strengths and weaknesses of the program that lasted until 1962. It was replaced by the current system of Guest Worker programs. Her engaging presentation highly reflected her passion and knowledge of the topic. The staff was equally engaged as reflected in the astute questions asked of Dr. Lipman after her presentation.



Thanks to the HHM committee members for their contributions this year: Olga Carias, Lina Castano-Duque, Matt King, Isabel Lima, Steve Lloyd, Jeanine Moraitis, Melissa Santos, and Jay Shockey.



2020 Combined Federal Campaign (CFC)

SRRC Combined Federal Campaign Kickoff

Submitted: Matt Lebar and Scott Pelitire

Official Solicitation Period September 21, 2020 - January 15, 2021

The annual CFC is an opportunity for all of us to make a difference and contribute to charities that change lives across the globe as well as right here at home. Many lives have been affected by COVID-19, natural disasters, and other unfortunate events this year. Please consider supporting charitable organizations on the frontlines of the COVID-19 pandemic, including those that provide medical care, food, and shelter to the most vulnerable.

Donating and volunteering through the Combined Federal Campaign is easy! There are more than 6,000 CFC-approved charities and many ways to give—by making either a recurring or one-time donation or by donating your time through volunteering opportunities.

Visit <https://msdeltacfc.givecfc.org/> to donate or get more information about the many charities.

This year, a virtual SRRC Halloween CFC kickoff will be held on Thursday, October 29th... stay tuned for more details and start preparing your Zoom-friendly costumes now!



2019 CFC Halloween kickoff costume contestants

Culture Passes

New Orleans Public Library is excited to announce the return of another one of their **Culture Pass** Partners: The New Orleans Museum of Art.

Any Orleans Parish resident over the age of 18 can use their Library card to reserve free entrance to the New Orleans Museum of Art, as well as the Audubon Nature Institute, the National WWII Museum, and the Pontchartrain Conservancy New Canal Lighthouse.

Visit culturepass.nolalibrary.org for more information.

Scientific Recognition

Dr. Hee Jin Kim's work on measuring and interpreting cotton fiber maturity for genetic and genomic analyses was recently featured on the cover of *Crop Science*.

Cotton fineness and maturity are two properties estimating fiber diameter and degree of internal fiber thickening. Accurate and efficient assessments are the key to utilize diversity of cotton fibers.

For more details on Hee Jin's article, go to:

Application of the Cottonscope for determining fiber maturity and fineness of an upland cotton MAGIC population. Hee Jin Kim, Christopher D. Delhom, David D. Fang, Linghe Zeng, Johnnie N. Jenkins, Jack C. McCarty, and Don C. Jones. *Crop Science*, 2020, Pages: 2266-2279.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/csc2.20197>.

Congratulations Hee Jin!



2020 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey closes on October 28

If you received an invitation to take the survey from evag@opm.gov, please invest the 20-30 minutes needed to provide your input. Your feedback is critical to helping us all make ARS a wonderful place to work. Our leaders are listening!

If you are a permanent employee that was onboard in October 2019 but did **not** receive the survey invitation, please send an e-mail message to the FEVS Help Desk at evag@opm.gov.

- o Let OPM know that you did not receive the survey invitation and provide your USDA e-mail address and your full name as it appears in the National Finance Center (NFC) database.
- o This year, OPM used a standard format using the official name that does not always match with the actual e-mail address. OPM corrected the e-mail address for everyone that has contacted the FEVS Helpdesk. Once OPM corrects your e-mail address, you will receive a survey invitation when the next automatic reminder (every Wednesday during the survey period) is sent.

In Memory of Althea Lane

Submitted by: Brian Condon

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All of SRRC and many more who knew her are profoundly saddened by the unexpected loss of Althea Lane, CCU Program Assistant. Being sudden, it has impacted each of us that much more sharply. Althea will be long remembered and deeply missed.

In remembrance, I asked people who knew her to send me some words about her. Anything really. And I received quite a few responses to which I add my own memories.



Althea was much loved. People saw her as a unifier and she had a calming nature. Though she used humor and some high energy conversation to get there. Many times, I would see people stopping by to just have a chat. It sounds simple but what she was doing was helping people talk things through. She was valued as a source of solace and common sense. Many of those conversations concluded with the phrase “just let it go” or something like “baby, it’s just not that complicated”. She could help change a complicated and frustrating situation and make it pretty simple and not so ominous. And uplift the spirits of whomever needed some ‘counselling’ at the same time. Everyone walked out of her office with a little more happiness and a more positive outlook. Maybe even a smile.

And such caring about people. She really did care. Althea took the time to help basically anyone who needed it. Not only in the uplifting manner she was known for but also in her capabilities and skills. She always knew how to solve a problem. Often, she would just go ahead and solve it on the spot. Althea was the go-to person when something needed to be fixed, a deadline was near, someone needed training or progress was needed. Althea thought of herself as Mama Althea though she never described it that way. When there was an error made by someone that I had to go make right, she would say to me “Mmmm hmmm, that’s your children there Dr. Condon, you got to go fix it”. And when someone did something really good, she would say to me “Yep! That’s my baby right there.” Classic mama. And we all loved it of course.

In the responses I received from those saying a few words, Althea is remembered most frequently for her laugh, smile and humor. I can attest to that many times over. No one can recall an instance where laughter was not part of the conversation. And what a laugh! Straight from the heart genuine laughter. I bet everyone at SRRC can remember at least once walking past Althea’s office and hearing that laugh far down the hall. Althea laughed with wry humor, ironic humor, “waddyagonnado” humor and even sarcastic humor. A very sharp wit indeed. But mostly, I think her laughter was directly expressing joy. That is a pretty rare thing. Maybe that constant connection to joy and her expression of it was Althea’s superpower. People were drawn to it but many couldn’t say why.

Althea was an actual mama of course and rightly very proud of her daughter Nicole. I met Nicole shortly after I started work in 2005. She is grown up now and what a young lady she is. Successful career, independent, a very good head on her shoulders and a loving daughter. That last one doubly so. I asked her if she would like to say some words too and here is what she said:

“My greatest, best friend, my whole heart and life has passed away unexpectedly. I have no idea how or what I am feeling. I know she loved me with her whole heart and I loved her with everything in me. She was proud of me and always encouraged my growth – my biggest supporter. If you knew her, you know she had an infectious smile and laugh and had so much love to give. She accepted everyone as they were and never asked for anything in return. I can’t imagine facing life knowing that I don’t have her to call, to hold, to hug and to laugh with. I won’t be able to tell her my good news or just crazy news to talk about. It is a harsh realization. And I will miss her like crazy. I loved her like crazy. There is a huge hole in my heart. Please pray for my family.”

And so we will.

In Memory of Althea Lane (cont.)

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Submitted by: Shannon Beltz, Safety Office & Pandemic Coordinator

Important Work Proposals

I know many of you are turning in proposals for Important Work, and that is great! This will give you the chance to do a small project in the lab and produce some data for papers, etc. Here are a few things we MUST keep in mind when applying for Important Work.

1. The work should NOT be full time (8 hrs/day, 5 days/wk) when possible. The point is not to work full-time, but to work enough to finish a small project or set of samples.
2. It can be different durations of time, Mon - 2hrs, Tues - 4 hrs, etc.
3. The emphasis is on the location(s) and time/hours, more than research details. ALL locations you will work in MUST be included (yes, even that quick trip to someone else's -80 or the auto-clave room). I can help or provide maps for room numbers.
4. Number of work days, work hours/day and total work hours MUST all be included. Please make sure that your time, dates, and hours match on your written proposal AND your spreadsheet.

This is the #1 reason proposals need editing or get kicked back.

5. Include where you will store & your eat lunch if that is applicable.

Always send me the Word document and the spreadsheet BEFORE you have converted to pdf and/or signed. I can't edit the documents once they are signed ☹.

Types of Work Currently Allowed

Essential Work:

- Only specific employees who have been designated as such (can do tasks and check on things for other employees)
- Not a specific time limit, but only done as necessary
Work is logged/approved by RL and Location Pandemic Coordinator (LPC) is notified

Quick Visit:

- Visit must be approved by RL and LPC
- Limited to 2 hours
- NOT meant to be research/science/planting
- Pick up files/computer files, quick lab maintenance (plug in freezer, reboot equipment, refill water bath)
- Appointment with IT
- Pick up/send packages
Meeting an outside contractor (visit time can be negotiated based on work)

Submitted by: Shannon Beltz, Safety Office & Pandemic Coordinator

Types of Work Currently Allowed (cont.)

Important Work:

- ANY science/research/planting falls under this category if not Essential
- Requires ALL proposal documentation (narrative & spreadsheet) completed by employee
- Keep work time to a minimum and should NOT appear as full time
- Work locations and safety/pandemic precautions are of the utmost importance
- Proposals must go through the LPC (who will acquire signatures from employee, RL, LPC, **Senior Management Official, and two at the Area level**)

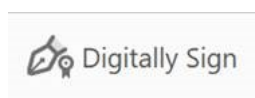
Work is managed and monitored by LPC

Adobe Digital Signature tips

Disclaimer: I am absolutely NOT a computer genius, but I have sure learned a LOT about digital documents and signatures since March! To apply for Important Work, we will need to do these steps, so here is a quick rundown. This is how to start with a Word document, convert to a pdf, and then digitally sign the pdf using your LincPass card.

1. Type your document in Word, using the Important Word template. The signature lines are included on the Word doc, but you DO NOT need them until you are completely done with editing.
2. When you are ready to convert to pdf, Go to 'File', then 'Save as Adobe PDF'.
3. Once in Adobe, click on 'Certificates' (NOT Fill & Sign. It is really tempting, but don't do it!). It looks like this on the Toolbar (usually on the side):

Once you have selected 'Certificates', you will be able to select 'Digitally Sign' and add



your signature to the pdf in the location of your choice.

This is how you add a digital signature to ANY pdf. And now you know 😊!

If you are at SRRC and there are any problems with air temperature, air flow, fume hoods, or ANYTHING facility-related, please do not hesitate to contact the Front Desk. The contractors are onsite and will address many of these issues.

Typically, this is the time of year that I would schedule flu shots at SRRC. So I wanted to send everyone a reminder to get a flu shot and protect yourself this season.

Flu Shots are typically no cost with insurance and are offered at many pharmacies and your physician's office.



Activities

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Submitted by: Terri von Hoven

New Orleans Restaurant Week, October 5-11

Missing your favorite restaurants or want to try something new? Enjoy Restaurant Week New Orleans which features specially-priced prix-fixe menus, for both dine in and take out. Enjoy 2-course lunches for \$25 or less, and 3-course dinners and brunches for \$45 or less!

<https://restaurantweekneworleans.com/restaurants/>

Orpheum Sessions presented by Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

Enjoy a series of eight virtual concerts performed by The Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra at the Orpheum Theater made available to season subscribers. <https://lpomusic.com/>

Enjoy Virtual Concerts at the New Orleans Jazz Museum

The New Orleans Jazz Museum and Jazz Foundation of America present an all-star jazz ensemble virtual performance, Free on Wednesdays and Thursdays in October.

Quarantunes! Every Friday at 2 pm, the Museum hosts virtual concerts with an exciting mix of talented Jazz musicians performing from their homes. Free. facebook.com/nolajazzmuseum/live

Balcony Livestream Concert Series: jazz musicians perform live from the Jazz Museum's balcony! Free on Tuesdays in October at 5pm facebook.com/nolajazzmuseum/live

For more information on the New Orleans Jazz Museum, check out their calendar:

<https://nolajazzmuseum.org/events?view=calendar&month=10-2020>

Ogden Museum Art Activities

Art & Zen Online Meditation Series, Wednesdays in October @ 12:00 - 12:30 pm.

Enjoy 30 minutes of LIVE seated mindfulness meditation inspired by a work of Southern art led by Ogden Museum Educator and yoga and meditation instructor, Mikhayla Harrell. All experience levels welcome. Registration required, and is FREE.

Drawing 101: Exploring Positive and Negative Space, Wednesdays in October @ 6:00 - 7:00 pm

Learn the ins and outs of sketching, and how to construct your own sketchbook with Museum Educator, Michelle Pontiff.

Young Audiences of Louisiana's Baby Artsplay at Home, Thursdays in October 9:30-11:00 am

Learn how to integrate purposeful activities into your children's daily routine and support their cognitive, physical and social development. Free 30-minute workshops held weekly to engage young children ages 12-24 months and their caregiver.

For more details on the Ogden Museum's programs, to go: <https://ogdenmuseum.org/event/>

Get outdoors, socially distant on kayaks!

City Park

Explore Big Lake and City Park's extensive network of bayous and lagoons.

Rental opportunities are available from kayaks to canoes to swan boats, \$11 to \$23 per hour.

<https://wheelfunrentals.com/la/new-orleans/city-park-new-orleans/rentals/>

Gondola rides are also an option, if you aren't eager to put in the work. <https://nolagondola.com/>

Bayou St. John

Bayou Paddle Sports rents kayaks, single, double, paddleboard, Thursdays - Mondays. Lessons and group outings are offered, \$22 - \$44 for 2 hour sessions. <https://www.bayoupaddlesports.com/>

Kayak Iti Yat offers guided tours highlighting the architecture along Bayou St John. They have a two hour tour, \$45 per person and a four hour Pontchartrain Paddle, \$75 per person, up and down the bayou covering architecture and the area's diverse eco-systems.

<https://kayakitiyat.com/kayak-tours/>

A Step Back in Time at SRRC

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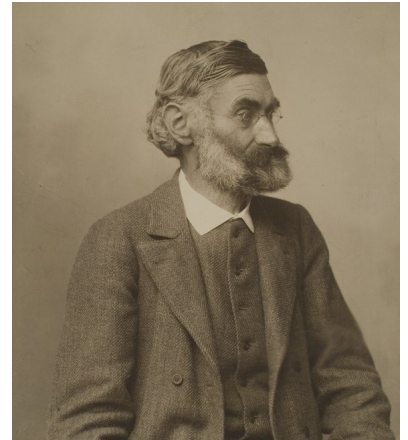
Submitted by: Christine Sickler

Abbe Refractometer

The Abbe refractometer was invented in 1869 by Ernst Abbe (1840-1905), a German physicist and professor at the University of Jena. He joined the firm of Carl Zeiss to improve the manufacturing of optical instruments, which at the time was largely based on trial and error.

The refractometer determines the refractive index, which describes how much light bends (refracts) as it moves through different materials, and the Abbe number, a measure of spectral dispersion of liquids. Refractometers are used in labs to identify substances, confirm purity, and measure the concentration of solutes in liquids.

Two Carl Zeiss Jena refractometers are on display in the SRRC Vintage Laboratory, both predating the establishment of SRRC.



circa 1900-1910



circa 1911-1926

Glass Recycling

Submitted by: Stephanie Gross

New Orleans has 2 new glass recycling drop off sites!

3935 LOUISA STREET - MONDAY'S & SATURDAY'S FROM 9AM-6PM

911 JOLIET STREET - WEDNESDAY'S FROM 9AM-6PM

The glass is being used for sandbag and other coastal restoration projects.

For more information, go to: <https://glasshalffullnola.org/>



Recent SRRC Publications

Submitted by: Suhad Wojkowski

Full text pdfs of SRRC publications are available in the Eprints database via “Library” link on the SRRC Intranet page: <http://nola.srrc.usda.gov:8000/srrcmef.htm>

Click on the article's title below to launch the pdf from Eprints.

Easson, Michael and Jordan, Jacobs H. and Chang, SeChin and Bland, John M. and Condon, Brian (2020) [Investigation of Bisphenol-Substituted Spirocyclic Phosphazenes as Cotton Textile-Based Flame Retardants](#). Journal of Engineered Fibers and Fabrics, 15. pp. 1-10.

Fang, David D. and Naoumkina, Marina and Thyssen, Gregory and Bechere, E. and Florane, Christopher B. (2020) [An EMS?Induced Mutation in a Tetratricopeptide Repeat?Like Superfamily Protein Gene \(Ghir_ A12G008870\) on Chromosome A12 is Responsible for the Lys Short Fiber Phenotype in Cotton](#). Theoretical and Applied Genetics, 133. pp. 271-282.

Hron, Rebecca J. and Hinchliffe, Doug and Condon, Brian (2020) [Optimized Hydroentanglement Processing Parameters for Nonwoven Fabrics Composed Entirely of Cotton Fibers](#). Journal of Engineered Fibers and Fabrics, 15. pp. 1-11.

Kim, Hee Jin and Delhom, Christopher D. and Fang, David D. and Zeng, Linghe and Jenkins, Johnie N. and McCarty, Jack C. and Jones, Don C. (2020) [Application of the Cottonscope for determining fiber maturity and fineness of an upland cotton MAGIC population](#). Crop Science, 60. pp. 2266-2279.

Li, Zhonghua and Wang, Pengcheng and You, Chunyuan and Yu, Jiwen and Zhang, Xiangnan and Yan, Feilin and Ye, Zhengxiu and Shen, Chao and Li, Baoqi and Guo, Kai and Liu, Nian and Thyssen, Gregory and Fang, David D. and Lindsey, Keith and Zhang, Xianlong and Wang, Maojun and Tu, Lili (2020) [Combined GWAS and Eqt Analysis Uncovers a Genetic Regulatory Network Orchestrating the Initiation of Secondary Cell Wall Development in Cotton](#). New Phytologist, 226. pp. 1738-1752.

Nam, Sunghyun and Hillyer, Matthew B. and Condon, Brian and Lum, June S. and Richards, Molly N. and Zhang, Qingbo (2020) [Silver Nanoparticle-Infused Cotton Fiber: Durability and Aqueous Release of Silver in Laundry Water](#). Journal of Agricultural and Food Chemistry, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1021/acs.jafc.9b07531>. pp. 1-10.

Qureshi, Nasib and Lin, X. and Liu, S. and Saha, Badal C. and Mariano, A.P. and Polaina, J. and Ezeji, T.C. and Friedl, A. and Maddox, I.S. and Klasson, K. Thomas and Dien, Bruce S. and Singh, V. (2020) [Global View of Biofuel Butanol and Economics of Its Production by Fermentation from Sweet Sorghum Bagasse, Food Waste, and Yellow Top Presscake: Application of Novel Technologies](#). Fermentation, 6 (58). pp. 1-11.